UNITED NATIONS **E**

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/ICEF/1995/NGO/5
20 September 1995

ENGLISH ONLY

UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND
Executive Board
Third regular session 1995
18-22 September 1995

FOR INFORMATION

STATEMENT OF THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGO) COMMITTEE ON UNICEF

Strengthening the UNICEF-NGO partnership: vision and strategies

1. The NGO Committee on UNICEF welcomes the UNICEF management review and appreciates the opportunity for NGOs to participate in its discussion.

2. One of the recommendations of the UNICEF management review is to strengthen UNICEF's partnership with NGOs at national, regional and international levels.

3. The NGO Committee on UNICEF believes that now is an excellent time to re-examine this relationship and formulate specific strategies for a renewed partnership between NGOs and UNICEF. Organized civil society has grown tremendously in the last 10 years and has expanded in scope and purpose. For example, in the area of emergency assistance, $11 billion are now being channelled through NGOs compared to $7 billion-$8 billion via the United Nations and its related agencies. We believe that it is in UNICEF's interest to work closely with NGOs for there to be harmony in policies and programmes.

4. This statement will focus on two areas: (a) recommendations of the NGO Committee on UNICEF on the way in which we perceive UNICEF's mandate and vision; and (b) recommendations for procedures to strengthen our partnership at country and headquarters levels.

Regarding UNICEF's mandate and vision

5. We urge UNICEF to serve as the lead global conscience for children, utilizing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as a legal framework for action at all levels.

6. We urge UNICEF to continue to formulate and assess the impact of its policies and programmes based on the whole needs of the child: physical, social, psychological, cultural and spiritual.

7. We urge UNICEF to continue to expand its programmes and policies in such a way as to draw on and support children, families and their communities as vital resources for sustainable development.

/...

Regarding procedures for a strengthened partnership at country and international levels

8. With the aim of improved sharing of information and most effective use of resources, we would like to suggest the following as essential:

(a) At the country level, the NGO Committee on UNICEF would request a stronger participation of relevant NGOs in the programming process, from the preparation of the situation analysis to the planning and implementation of the country programmes. This is already being done in many countries. We believe that this collaboration has had a positive effect on the outreach and effectiveness of country programmes and, therefore, should become the standard practice in all countries. We would also urge UNICEF to make capacity-building of NGOs, particularly emerging NGOs, a priority: they will be key to ensuring the sustainability of programmes at the country level;

(b) At the international level, the NGO Committee on UNICEF sees a need for increased consultation on the many urgent and preoccupying issues that we all face with regard to children. Mechanisms for ongoing dialogue need to be strengthened. For example, the NGO Committee would request to be involved more systematically in the preparation of policy papers on subjects related to NGO expertise. NGOs can make a meaningful contribution, especially when the drafts are still at the working level. We recognize that since NGOs are diverse and geographically widespread and require time for internal consultation, that a process has to be created which allows active participation in a realistic and practical way. However, the very purpose of granting "consultative status" to NGOs is for UNICEF and its Executive Board to draw on our expertise. We believe that a practical and enriching process can be developed.

9. The lives of children, families and their communities will be improved if projects are built on their strengths and resources and if international instruments - particularly the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child - are implemented and monitored. The NGO sector is close to the realities of the field level, is actively allocating funds in a way that often surpasses that of the government donor agencies and has been instrumental in formulating international legislation on behalf of children. A strengthened UNICEF-NGO partnership will facilitate the building of more just and caring societies in this historic post-cold war period.